

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2107

As Reported By House Committee On:

Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to limiting fishing of shrimp.

Brief Description: Limiting fishing of shrimp.

Sponsors: Representatives Anderson and Linville.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 2/24/99, 3/2/99 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Transferring the Puget Sound shrimp fishery from an emerging fishery management regime to a limited entry management regime.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Buck, Republican Co-Chair; Regala, Democratic Co-Chair; Anderson, Democratic Vice Chair; Sump, Republican Vice Chair; G. Chandler; Clements; Doumit; Eickmeyer; Ericksen; Pennington; Rockefeller and Stensen.

Staff: Carole Richmond (786-7114).

Background:

An "emerging commercial fishery" means the commercial taking of a newly classified species of food fish or shellfish, the commercial taking of a classified species with gear not previously used for that species, or the commercial taking of a classified species in an area from which that species has not been previously taken. (RCW 75.28.740) The purpose of the designation is to allow scientific data to be collected on fishery impacts.

The director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife may by rule designate a fishery as an emerging commercial fishery. The director must include in the designation whether the fishery is one that requires a vessel. Within five years after adopting rules to govern the number of participants in an emerging commercial fishery, the director shall provide a report to the Legislature which outlines the status of the fishery and a recommendation as to whether a separate commercial fishery license, license fee, or limited harvest program should be established for that fishery.

A person may not take food fish or shellfish in a fishery designated as an emerging commercial fishery without an emerging commercial fishery license and a permit from the director. Two permit types are created: (1) a trial fishery permit which is issued if the number of participants in an emerging commercial fishery does not need to be restricted; and (2) an experimental fishery permit which is issued if the number of participants in an emerging commercial fishery does need to be restricted.

In 1994, Puget Sound shrimp pot and Puget Sound shrimp trawl fisheries were designated as emerging commercial fisheries for which vessels are required. The rule also establishes that Puget Sound shrimp may only be fished with an experimental fishery permit, determines who may qualify for obtaining a permit, and limits the transferability of the permits.

A limited entry fishery is one that controls the amount of fishing effort by restricting the number of operators or vessels.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Clarification and guidance are provided to persons who will be affected by the transfer of the shrimp fishery from an emerging commercial fishery to a limited entry fishery. Fees for the shrimp pot limited entry fishery are established. As of January 1, 2000, both shrimp pot and shrimp trawl fishers must have a shrimp pot or shrimp trawl Puget Sound fishery license. As of January 1, 2000, the fishery will be restricted to those fishers who held an emerging commercial fishery license the previous year. The Department of Fish and Wildlife and the shrimp industry are directed to refine the limited entry program and to report to the Legislature by December 31, 1999.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill provides more explicit direction for the transfer of the shrimp fishery from an emerging commercial fishery status to a limited entry status. The direction pertains to the annual fee schedule for commercial licenses and to who may participate in the new limited entry fishery.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (Original Bill) This bill provides the shrimp industry with the certainty it needs to continue making the investments necessary to stay in business. A report and recommendations are due from the Department of Fish and Wildlife, but until that information is available, it's important for the Legislature to provide policy direction.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Dave Anderson, prime sponsor; and Morris Barker, Department of Fish and Wildlife.